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Atlanta spirits shines amid storm

By Mayor Shirley Franklin, City of Atlanta

Since 9:38 p.m. Friday, March 14, when the intense storm swept through Vine City, downtown Atlanta, the Old Fourth Ward, Cabbagetown and into East Atlanta, representatives from Atlanta city government along with other local governments, first responders, and non-profit organizations have been working around the clock to help residents and business owners devastated by the tornado.

Immediately after the storm struck, the Atlanta-Fulton County Emergency Management Agency activated the Emergency Operations Center, staffed with officials and personnel representing several City departments to assess the damage, provide public information support, and coordinate shelters and services for displaced residents.

Atlanta City employees from Communications, Human Services, and Constituent Services to the Atlanta Police Department, Atlanta Fire Rescue and the Department of Public Works; from Watershed Management and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to Planning and Community Development – were engaged in those moments Friday night, and have maintained a presence in the relief efforts throughout these following days.

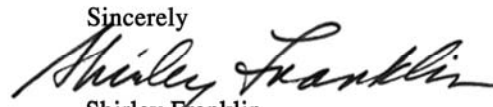
During this unavoidable crisis, help was swift and generous from many surrounding jurisdictions. Atlanta received help from public safety and public works departments from Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, Gwinnet and Rockdale counties. With that help, the Atlanta Police Department was able to supplement its team with more than 200 hundred people to ensure a rapid and thorough response.

Our community stakeholders contributed to the relief efforts as well, including the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Georgia Emergency Management Agency, Federal Emergency Management Agency, United Way, Concerned Black Clergy, Hands on Atlanta, Regional Council of Churches, Catholic Charities, Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta, North Georgia United Methodist Conference, Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, Senior Connections, Kroger, and Wal-Mart. Several individual churches form throughout the Atlanta area answered the call, including Antioch Baptist, Beulah Baptist, Cosmopolitan AME, Martha Brown United Methodist, Mt. Gilead Baptist, Mt. Pisgah United Methodist and St. Paul United Methodist churches. On behalf of the City of Atlanta, we thank all of these organizations. Additionally, I must extend a very special “thank you” to The Home Depot who contributed \$25,000 and a number of volunteers to the relief effort.

The City of Atlanta would also like to thank several leaders for their offers of assistance, including city officials from Denver, Baltimore and Seattle, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Congressman John Lewis and Senator Johnny Isakson.

In the days to come, the federal, state and city government, along with our relief partners, will continue to clear debris, evaluate structural damage, and provide public information on the disaster recovery as we move forward.

The tornado brought out the best in our employees, officials, partners, and unnamed neighbors who helped the needy, and everyone who seemed to capture the spirit of this city that continues to rise again and again. I thank you all.

Sincerely

Shirley Franklin